Environmental Toolbox

Technical Module

Cultural Property Protection

Objectives

- Understand the importance of protecting cultural property and historical resources in a base camp:
  - For our own reputation
  - For local considerations
  - For future generations
- Employ practices to minimize negative impact
- Establish a management process for these considerations

Lack of information and awareness is the primary reason cultural property and historical resources are damaged

Why Should You Care?

- Protection of cultural property and historical resources* in a base camp:
  - Shows respect for others' history and culture
  - Preserves antiquities and resources that can be of worldwide significance
  - Can foster good will from local government and community
  - Maintains local community cultural identity and potential future tourism assets
- Failure to do so can strain relations with the local community or host nation

Meeting mission requirements is paramount, but every effort should be made to protect these resources to the extent possible

* Some examples of cultural property and historical resources are: archeological sites, sacred places, historic structures, and monuments

Examples of Laws and Regulations

Cultural property must be respected per

- The 1954 Hague Convention
- United Nation's Secretary General (UNSG) Bulletin on the Observance by the United Nations Forces of International Humanitarian Law (ST/SGB/1999/13)
- United Nations, Environmental Policy for Field Missions, 2009

North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) documents also address cultural property protection

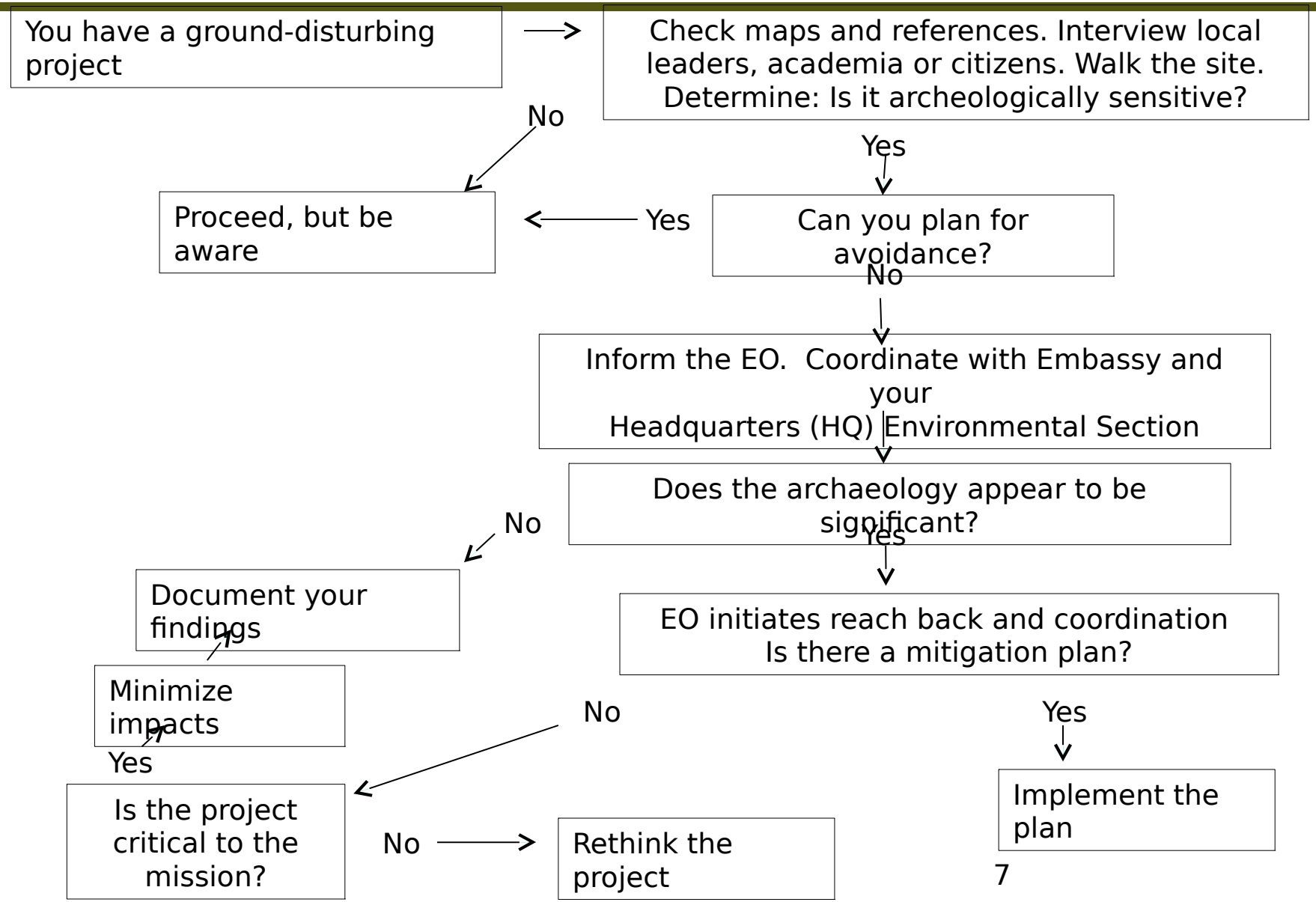
This UN symbol means this property requires protection

Environmental Officer (EO) Responsibilities*

- Access government intelligence and other information (such as public documents and websites) prior to deployment
- Be familiar with and understand applicable laws and policies (e.g., international, your own nation's, host nation law, mission regulations)
- Work with local, international subject matter experts (SMEs) at museums, archeological, religious sites, etc.
- Identify cultural and historical sites during base selection and set-up
- Create a list of protected cultural property within the base (and area of operations), and keep it updated. Provide this information to the base commander so that troops can be given guidance to try to:
  - Avoid adverse effects if possible
  - Minimize direct impacts and collateral damage if avoidance is not an option
  - Recover: take appropriate responses and reactions when cultural property has been damaged
  - Maximize respect for and protection of cultural property, which can result in greater mission success
- Document information prior to transfer and/or closure of the base camp

*This assumes there is no cultural affairs officer in the deploying force

Sample Flowchart


You have a ground-disturbing project
Check maps and references. Interview local leaders, academia or citizens. Walk the site. Determine: Is it archeologically sensitive?
No
Yes
Proceed, but be aware
Yes
Can you plan for avoidance?
No
Inform the EO. Coordinate with Embassy and your Headquarters (HQ) Environmental Section
Does the archaeology appear to be significant?
No
Yes
Document your findings
EO initiates reach back and coordination Is there a mitigation plan?
Minimize impacts
No
Yes
Yes
Is the project critical to the mission?
No
Rethink the project
Implement the plan

What You SHOULD Do

- Recognize that safeguarding cultural property in-theater may be required by treaty and law
- Learn about cultural or historical sites and values where you are
- Learn about basic geography of the area: not everything may be what it appears (e.g., in some places, what seem like natural hills are actually archeological sites)

ENVIRONMENT-CHAD

Peacekeepers Try To Tread Lightly

David Axe

IRIBA, Jul 4 (IPS) - Polish army Lieutenant Colonel Marc Gryga didn't realize he was planning on building his country's major base here in eastern Chad on top of a cemetery. "It didn't look like any cemetery you see in the United States or Europe," he says, referring to absence of headstones.

Credit:David Axe/IPS

Polish army engineers build a forward operating base near Iriba, in Eastern Chad

But local leaders from this remote town near the Sudan border weren't shy about telling Gryga he'd screwed up – and EUFOR, the 4,000-strong European Union peacekeeping force deploying to Chad to protect Darfuri refugees and aid workers, promptly agreed to build the "North Star" base somewhere else. Fortunately Gryga's troops had not broken ground yet, so the course change was not drastic.

The misunderstanding over the Polish base was just the first in a series of minor clashes between EUFOR and Chadians. In addition to choosing a location for the base, access to local water supplies and damage that EUFOR's military vehicles are doing to the country's fragile roads have also

What You SHOULD Do

- Ask questions and consult with experts, especially before beginning any construction
- If the camp area has cultural sites
  - Document site conditions using photos and global positioning system (GPS) to verify location and coordinates
  - Develop ways to protect the sites (e.g., warning signs with appropriat UN symbol)
  - Report any observed looting or vandalism

Posted sign: Archeological site.
Do not disturb dirt mounds

What You Should NOT Do

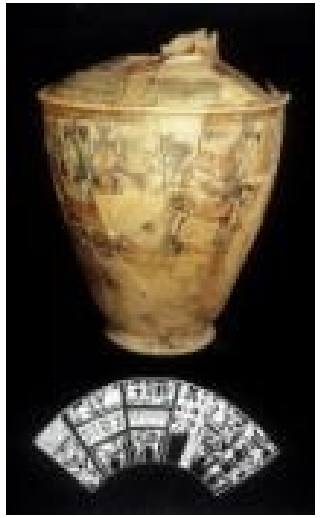
While recognizing that military requirements take precedence,

- Do not bed down without determining if the site is historically important
  - Do not assume you can tell this from maps
  - Do not assume you know what to look for (valuable objects may not look important)
- Do not drive over or across cultural property or historical sites
- Do not dig at an archeological site without higher level approval

Above: Afghan cemetery; below: ancient well

What You Should NOT Do

- Without a direct order or imperative military necessity:
  - Do not climb on or deface any monument or site
  - Do not make unjustified military use of a cultural site
- Do not remove or pur ties, or cultural heritage it



Ways to Protect Cultural Sites

If military needs dictate the use of a protected cultu site, these are examples of bed-down protections

Examples of Visual Tools

The next slides show examples of ways to raise awareness among deploying forces about cultural property protection issues. In addition to posters that can be displayed in the base camp, for example, these examples show playing cards created in both The Netherlands and the United States. The third example is a pocket card, developed in the United States, that has been given to deploying forces

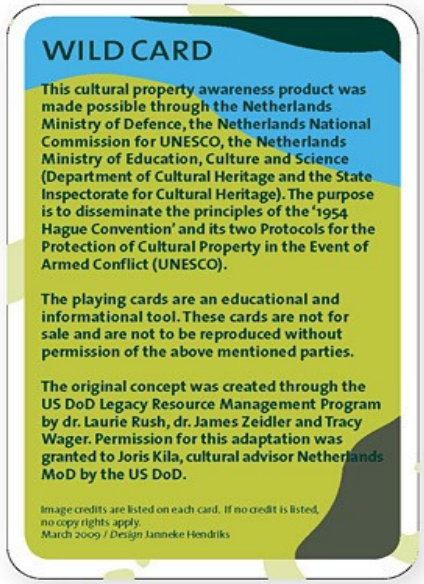
Examples of Playing Cards

3
3
J. Kila
St. Peter mural Matejce monastery, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
No graffiti!
Defacing walls or ruins with spray paint or other materials is disrespectful and counter-productive to the mission.
3
3

2
2
Department of Defense U.S.
If you find artefacts damaged by water, please leave them wet and do not touch. Inform your superior.
2
2

7
7
Dutch Tax and Customs Administration
Customs play an important role in seizing illegally obtained cultural property, such as this ivory object.
7
7

2
2
E. Meijsenk
Mill Network at Kinderdijk-Elshout, the Netherlands
World Heritage sites belong to all the peoples of the world. Its protection and preservation for future generations is our responsibility. (whc.unesco.org)
2
2


WILD CARD
This cultural property awareness product was made possible through the Netherlands Ministry of Defence, the Netherlands National Commission for UNESCO, the Netherlands Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Department of Cultural Heritage and the State Inspectorate for Cultural Heritage). The purpose is to disseminate the principles of the '1954 Hague Convention' and its two Protocols for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict (UNESCO).
The playing cards are an educational and informational tool. These cards are not for sale and are not to be reproduced without permission of the above mentioned parties.
The original concept was created through the US DoD Legacy Resource Management Program by dr. Laurie Rush, dr. James Zeidler and Tracy Wager. Permission for this adaptation was granted to Joris Kila, cultural advisor Netherlands MoD by the US DoD.
Image credits are listed on each card. If no credit is listed, no copy rights apply.
March 2009 / Design Janneke Hendriks

Examples of Playing Cards

Ancient Iraqi heritage is part of your heritage. Old stories say that Jonah of the bible was buried in this hill.
[Nabi Yunis Mosque in Mosul, Iraq]
Drive around – not over – archaeological sites.
Cylinder seals look like carved pieces of chalk. As with other artifacts, do not buy them!
The DoD needs your help in protecting cultural heritage resources.
Heritage Resource Preservation
Support the Mission
Show Respect
Win Hearts and Minds
Legacy Resource Management Program
Ninety-nine percent of mankind's history can only be understood through archaeology.
[Ancient ruins at Samarra, Iraq]
This site has survived for seventeen centuries. Will it and others survive you?
[The Ctesiphon Arch, Iraq]
Respect ruins whenever possible. They protect you and your cultural history.
[Ancient minaret at Samarra, Iraq]

Pocket Card

Heritage Preservation
ROE first!
Pocket Guide for US Military Personnel

Where are sites likely to occur?

- High points in the landscape
- A rise in elevation may be covering ruins
- Water sources in dry places are likely to have sites.
- Defensible positions.

- **What is a site?**
- Ancient buildings or ruins
- Artifacts on the surface
- Traces of earlier people like dumps, ruins of homes and buildings, fireplaces, and campsites

What is an artifact?

- Objects and pieces of objects left behind by earlier people

If it is a site:

- Report it to an officer in charge
- Surround it with engineering tape and put it off limits
- Consult with local leaders
- Note the location and take photographs if possible
- Report evidence of looting
- Minimize digging and any other earthmoving activity
- Fill sand bags elsewhere

If you encounter artifacts or ruins:

- **STOP DIGGING**
- **NO HEAVY EQUIPMENT**
- **DON'T DRIVE ON RUINS OR ANCIENT PAVEMENTS**

BEWARE

- The enemy may use cultural properties including ruins, cemeteries, and religious buildings as firing points. Follow rules of engagement.

- Buying looted artifacts funds the insurgency and encourages theft and more looting. These objects can include but are not limited to coins, pottery, stone tools, carvings, pieces of decorative architecture, statuary, and jewelry.

- Sight-seeing could put you in a predictable location – avoid attack!

NO COLLECTING
NO GRAFFITI
NO VANDALISM

Support the Mission
Show Respect
Win Hearts and Minds

Conclusions

- Protection of cultural property and historical resources
  - Has potential legal implications
  - Shows respect for others' history and culture
  - Preserves antiquities and resources that can be of worldwide significance
  - Can foster good will from local government and community
- Failure to do so can
  - Alienate the local population, which can negatively affect the mission